

II International Museum Conference “Sustainable Dialogues”

“Museums through the local gaze”

Saint-Petersburg, 2017, September 6-9

Organizers: Russian Committee of the International Council of Museums (ICOM Russia), Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, State Hermitage Museum, The State Russian Museum and Exhibition Centre ROSPHOTO, DutchCulture, Foundation of Amsterdam Museums (SAM)

Concept note

Any museum regardless the type, size and juridical status is obviously situated in a particular territory and, thus, connected to local life and communities. They are primary sites for cultural exchange and civic dialogues concerned with community interests. Museums are increasingly valued by the society for their ability to redistribute wealth in the form of access to scientific, cultural and artistic resources, mitigating the culture gap that arises from income disparities. However, the work with local communities is not an easy task. There are multiple audiences with various needs and expectations. Within this conference, we seek to exchange knowledge and experience between Russian and Dutch museums on how they interact and built partnership with communities as well as address ongoing challenges connected to this work.

6 September

Participants arrival

7 September

Plenary session: Museum as a Platform for Education and Mediation of Social Relations

Today’s world experiences radical changes and meets with multiple crises — social, political, environmental — which influence people’s lives at different levels. Through education and communication, museums are committed to save heritage and traditions, answer current social requirements and promote a better future. The plenary session will focus on museum’s power to create a platform for in-depth dialogue between different social groups and address educational needs of various communities.

- How can a museum become the centre of public and cultural for local communities?
- The making of meaning: how can museum expositions transmit important social messages?
- How can educational programs stimulate social cohesion and neighbourhood interaction?

- Can the museum act as a mediator in social and historical problems and challenges? Examples of museum programs, which feature themes of non-violent conflict resolution, social justice issues and peace.

Speed-dates session: Dutch-Russian Cultural Cooperation and Exchange

Welcome reception

8 September

Section 1: Museums as Agents of Social Inclusion

In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on access to museum collections and services for a much broader audience, including disabled people. It is believed that museums play a significant role in promoting social inclusion, in partnership with other agencies and community-based institutions. Remarkably, the notion of social inclusion is complex and museums respond to the needs of the audience in ways that are appropriate to their own circumstances. What is the driving force for museums is the feeling of responsibility to contribute through their collections, displays and practices towards more inclusive societies. But how can the museum estimate its impact on individuals, communities and wider society? It is hardly possible to create a universal system of measurement. Nevertheless, we should acknowledge ways in which museums contributions to social inclusion of disabled people can be examined. Within this session, we invite experts in to share relevant findings and discuss the effectiveness of social inclusive programmes in museums.

Section 2: Museum as Local Economy Driver

During this session, we will explore how the museum can become a driver of sustainable socio-economic development of the territory through harnessing the value generated by the emerging wave of creative-driven commerce and exchange. In particular, we are interested in cultural industries since they contribute to the diversification of economy, create new jobs as well as carry a form of cultural expression.

- How can a museum encourage business to invest in cultural projects and events?
- How can a museum become successful in the production and dissemination of cultural products and services based on its collections and activities?
- How does the museum cooperate with local craftsmen, artists and other masters and support cultural entrepreneurship?
- Does the museum have power to create a compounding effect in the local economy?
- How can local business benefit from the partnership with museums?